

Friends, Society of.

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K

S U M M A R Y

OF THE

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND DISCIPLINE,

OF

F R I E N D S:

WRITTEN AT THE DESIRE

OF THE

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS,

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INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH more than a century hath elapsed since we became a distinct religious society; yet, from several causes, our principles at this day are frequently either not understood, or misrepresented. Many books, explanatory of our tenets and practices, have indeed been published by authors of our own profession. Some of these are more diffuse than every reader hath leisure or inclination to peruse; others, more compendious, do not extend to all the particulars which we ourselves wish to be known, or with which inquirers may desire to be acquainted. It is therefore judged expedient to present to such as are disposed to be rightly informed respecting us, a summary account of our origin and history, of our doctrines, and of our discipline; which may give the reader a true, though general representation; and then, as leisure or inclination may allow or induce him, he may render his knowledge of us, and of our principles, more particular, by having recourse to some of the publications already hinted at. To such a purpose, among others, the works of George Fox, William Sewell, William Penn, and Robert Barclay, are well adapted: and to those who may be thus induced to inquire into our principles, we would also recommend the example of the

Bereans ; who examined the Holy Scriptures to find if " those things were so."*

It may, however, be remarked, that the Gospel, which we believe to be the highest as well as the last dispensation of God to man, can never be so well understood, as when it is considered as having the boundless love of the great Creator for its cause, and the salvation of the whole human race for its end and aim.

It seems to be time for the sincere in heart to wave the ceremonials of religion, (concerning which there hath been enough of contention and animosity) for the sake of its essence. In proportion as men are gathered to the one thing needful, the government of Christ's Spirit in the heart, they lose the inclination for contention, and are in the true way to unity: then can they breathe forth the primitive and permanent gospel-language, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."†

* Acts xvii. 11.

† Luke ii. 14.

S U M M A R Y, &c.

C H A P T E R I.

HISTORY.

TH E beginning of the seventeenth century is known to have been a time of great dissension in England, respecting religion. Many pious persons had been dissatisfied with the settlement of the Church of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Various societies of Dissenters had accordingly arisen; some of whom evinced their sincerity by grievous sufferings under the intolerance of those who governed church-affairs.* But these societies, notwithstanding their honest zeal, seemed to have stopped short in their progress towards a complete reformation;† and, degenerating into formality, to have left their most enlightened members still to lament the want of something more instructive, and consolatory to the soul, than the most rigorous observance of their

* Sewell, p. 5, 6. Ed. 1722. † Penn, vol. 5. p. 211, 212. Ed. 1782

ordinances had ever produced. Thus dissatisfied and disconsolate, they were ready to follow any teacher, who seemed able to direct them to that light and peace of which they felt the need. Many such in succession engaged their attention; until finding the insufficiency of them all, they withdrew from the communion of every visible church, and dwelt retired, and attentive to the inward state of their own minds: often deeply distressed for the want of that true knowledge of God, which they saw to be necessary for salvation, and for which, according to their ability, they fervently prayed. These sincere breathings of spirit being answered by the extension of some degree of heavenly consolation, they became convinced, that as the heart of man is the scene of the tempter's attacks, it must also be that of the Redeemer's victory. With renewed fervency, therefore, they sought his appearance in their minds; and thus being renewedly furnished with his saving light and help, they not only became instructed in the things pertaining to their own salvation; but they discovered many practices in the world, which have a shew of religion, to be nevertheless the effect of the unsubjected will of man, and inconsistent with the genuine simplicity of the Truth.

These people were at first hidden from each other, and each probably conceived his own heart to be the single repository of a discovery so important; but it did not consist with divine goodness, that the candle thus
lighted

frighted should always remain under the bed, or the bushel. (a) Our honourable elder George Fox, who had signally experienced the afflicting dispensations we have described, and had also been quickened by the immediate touches of divine love, could not satisfy his apprehensions of duty to God, without bearing public testimony against the common modes of worship, and directing the people where to find the like consolation and instruction.* As he travelled in this service, he met with divers of those seeking persons who had been exercised in a similar manner; these readily received his testimony; several of them also became preachers of the same doctrine; † multitudes were convinced of the reality of this inward manifestation, (b) and many meetings were settled.

Those who attempt to detach the people from the teachings of men, must expect for their enemies those men who make a gain of teaching. Such was the lot of our first friends: and laws, made either in the times of popery, or since the reformation against non-conformists, served as the means of gratifying the jealousy of the priests, and the intolerance of the magistrates. Indeed, at the time they first attracted public notice, legal pretences were not always thought necessary to justify the abuse which they suffered. It was during the time of the ‡ commonwealth, when opposition to a national ministry who

(a) Mark iv. 21. * Fox's Journal, p. 14, 15, 21. Edit. 1765.

† Ibid. 16. (b) 1 Cor. xii. 7. ‡ Fox, 26.

were supposed to be peculiarly reformed, was deemed an offence of no small import.* Much personal abuse was accordingly bestowed; imprisonment was common, and corporal punishment frequent. Imprisonment was often rendered more severe and disgusting by the cruelty of particular magistrates, and from the numbers that were confined together; and stripes, under pretence of vagrancy, were inflicted without regard to sex, and on persons of unimpeached character, and of good circumstances in the world.†

George Fox‡ was one of the first of our Friends who was imprisoned. He was confined at Nottingham in the year 1649, for having publicly opposed a preacher, who had asserted that the more sure word of prophecy, mentioned 2 Pet. i. 19, was the Scripture; George Fox declaring that it was the Holy Spirit: and in the following year, being brought before two justices in Derbyshire, one of them, scoffing at G. Fox, for having bidden him, and those about him, tremble at the word of the Lord, gave to our predecessors the name of *Quakers*§; § an appellation which soon became and hath remained our most usual denomination; but they themselves adopted, and have transmitted to us, the endearing appellation of *Friends*.

Although Oliver Cromwell did not employ his authority to put a stop to persecution, it doth not

* Bessé's Sufferings of the People called Quakers, ch. 6. and 29. and passim. † Bessé, Suff. Pref. and passim. ‡ Fol. 24. || Ibid. 29.

§ Sewell, 25.

appear that he was inclined to promote it. He gave several of our friends access to him; and once in particular when George Fox had been brought to him as a prisoner,* he released him after a considerable time spent in conference: on which occasion he confessed that our friends were ' a people risen up that he ' could not win, either with gifts, honours, offices, ' or places.†

Persecution however continued; but when Charles II. on the prospect of his restoration, issued from Breda, amongst other things, his declaration for liberty of conscience, it might well have been expected that Friends would be permitted to exercise their religion without molestation. Yet during this reign they not only were harassed with the oath of allegiance, which, in common with all oaths, they scrupled to take, and by which they often incurred tedious imprisonment, and not unfrequently premunire; but new laws || were made, by which even their meetings for worship subjected them to punishment.

The king, as a branch of the legislature, joined in the enacting of these laws; nevertheless he did not seem in all cases to countenance severity; for in an instance wherein he acted independently of the Parliament, he was the means of affording relief in the most sanguinary persecution which our Friends ever

* Sewell, 98.

† Ibid. 99.

|| 16th Car. II. Cap. 4.

22nd Car. II. Cap. 1.

Also 13 and 14th Car. II. Cap. 1.

experienced. This was in New-England, where it was made penal for a friend even to reside.

The first friends* who arrived at Boston were women. These were imprisoned, and otherwise cruelly treated. The date of this transaction is 1656. The following year the scourge was employed, and a woman † is also recorded to have been the first who suffered stripes. She was the wife of a tradesman in London, and had made a voyage to Boston to warn the people against persecution. Great numbers underwent this punishment; but stripes proving insufficient to deter our Friends from the exercise of their religious duty, in going to such places, and performing such services, as they believed to be required by the divine will; it was next attempted to discourage them by a law ‡ for cutting off their ears. This was executed in vain; and accordingly the intolerance of the persons in power produced another, which subjected Friends to banishment on pain of death. Their constancy § however was not thus to be shaken, and four friends, amongst whom also was a woman, were hanged at Boston.

In this extremity, Samuel Shattock, § a friend who had been banished under the last mentioned law, came to England; and application being made to the king by Edward Burrough, who was admitted to a personal audience, Charles granted his mandamus (dated 9th

* Sewell, 160. † Ibid. 170. ‡ Ibid. 194. 198. || Ibid. 199. 226 to 235. 276. § Ibid. 280, 281

September, 1661) to stop the severities in New-England, and appointed Samuel Shattock his deputy to carry it to Boston.

Nor were the good offices of Charles II. confined to our Friends of New England. Notwithstanding the continuance of persecution in England, the king generally appeared inclinable to grant relief, and frequently received the personal application of our friend George Whitehead * and others, on behalf of their suffering brethren. In 1672,† he released, under the great seal, such Friends as were imprisoned on account of the oath of allegiance, to the number of about four hundred, and the Society had some respite from persecution; but not being protected by law, persecutors and informers soon recommenced their oppression, and at the king's decease, about fifteen hundred were in prison, or prisoners.‡

Although the practice of inflicting corporal punishment on Friends, seems in England to have fallen into disuse at the restoration; yet the reign of Charles II. must be considered as the time of the greatest suffering to our society. The imprisonments were long, often terminating only with the life of the prisoner. In this reign also, the crowds shut up together increased, in many places, the common sufferings of confinement; which, in some, were also augmented by the violent tempers of magistrates, or by the barbarity

* G. Whitehead's Life. passim. † Ibid. p. 353.

‡ Sewell, 586. 1684.

of gaolers. The fines imposed by the new laws, were exacted with a rigour that generally oppressed the sufferer, and sometimes nearly left him destitute of household goods ; and several families experienced the separation of the near connexions of life, by the execution of that law* which subjected our Friends to banishment.

It is well known that James II. to favour (as is supposed) the religion to which he was attached, suspended the operation of the penal laws against dissenters. Our Friends had their share in the benefit arising from this measure ; but it was not until the reign of king William, that they obtained some degree of legal protection. Besides their disuse of the national forms of worship, their refusing to swear and to pay tithes had been among the principal causes of their sufferings. In the reign of William and Mary, an act was made,† which, with a few exceptions, allowed to their affirmation the legal force of an oath, and provided a less oppressive mode of recovering tithes, under a certain amount. These provisions were made perpetual in the reign of George I. ‡ and thus Friends, who also, in common with other dissenters, received the advantage of the act of toleration, have been in a great measure relieved from persecution.

At the same time that the society in England experienced the vicissitudes which have been thus briefly

* 16 Car. II. Cap. 4.

† 6th and 8th William III. Cap. 34.

‡ 1st George I. Cap. 6.

mentioned,

mentioned, similar circumstances befel our Friends in Ireland. In that nation also, they propagated their principles, settled meetings, suffered persecution, and were at length relieved by law. (a)

The means of persecution, though now generally condemned by our countrymen, are not wholly removed; and we are still liable to suffer in the Exchequer, and in the Ecclesiastical Court: but this must be understood only with respect to Great Britain and Ireland; for in America the people at present are not bound to support a national ministry; nor, when this was in some parts the case, were methods employed so tedious and so severe as in England. (b)

It has already been mentioned, that our Friends above a century ago, had made their appearance in New-England, from whence all the violence of their persecutors had not been able to expel them. They were also early to be found in other colonies, in divers of which they underwent persecution; but on the acquisition of Pennsylvania by William Penn,

(a) Those who are desirous of particular information respecting Friends in Ireland, may consult Edmundson's Journal, and Butty's History of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers.

(b) It is worthy of remark, that in the province of Massachusetts, in which the most sanguinary laws had been made and put into execution against Friends, the first law was made exempting them from contributing to the support of the publick ministry: an act of Assembly having passed for that purpose in 1731, Jonathan Belcher being governor.

many of them were induced to remove into that new province ; which soon became, and still remains to be, the largest settlement of Friends in America.—They are settled however in most of the other states and provinces of North America ; and although they have enjoyed a great share of tranquillity, yet during the commotions which terminated in the separation of the United States from the dominion of Great Britain, Friends were involved in great trouble, by refusing to join in the military services which were required of them ; and many were reduced, from circumstances of ease, if not of affluence, to the verge of want, by the excessive seizures which were made of their property to recover the fines imposed for their refusing to serve personally, or by substitute, in war.

C H A P T E R II.

DOCTRINE.

WE agree with other professors of the Christian name, in the belief in one eternal God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe ; and in Jesus Christ his Son, the Messiah, and Mediator of the New Covenant. (*a*)

When we speak of the gracious display of the love of God to mankind, in the miraculous conception, birth, life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour, we prefer the use of such terms as we find in Scripture ; and, contented with that knowledge which divine wisdom hath seen meet to reveal, we attempt not to explain those mysteries which remain under the veil ; nevertheless we acknowledge and assert the Divinity of Christ, who is the Wisdom and Power of God unto salvation. (*b*)

To Christ alone we give the title of the Word of God, (*c*) and not to the Scriptures ; although we highly esteem these sacred writings, in subordination to the Spirit (*d*) from which they were given forth ; and we hold, with the apostle Paul, that they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (*e*)

(*a*) Heb. xii. 24.(*b*) 1 Cor. i. 24.(*c*) John i. 1.(*d*) 2 Pet. i. 21.(*e*) 2 Tim. iii. 15.

We reverence those most excellent precepts which are recorded in Scripture to have been delivered by our great Lord, and we firmly believe that they are practicable, and binding on every Christian; and that in the life to come every man will be rewarded according to his works. (f) And further it is our belief, that, in order to enable mankind to put in practice these sacred precepts, many of which are contradictory to the unregenerate will of man, (g) every man *Universal* coming into the world is endued with *& Saving* a measure of the Light, Grace, or good Spirit of Christ; by which, as *Light.* it is attended to, he is enabled to distinguish good from evil, and to correct the disorderly passions and corrupt propensities of his nature, which mere reason is altogether insufficient to overcome. For all that belongs to man is fallible, and within the reach of temptation; but this Divine Grace, which comes by Him who hath overcome the world, (i) is, to those who humbly and sincerely seek it, an all-sufficient and present help in time of need. By this, the snares of the enemy are detected, his allurements avoided, and deliverance is experienced through faith in its effectual operation; whereby the soul is translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and from under the power of Satan, into the marvellous light and kingdom of the Son of God.

(f) Matt. xvi. 27.

(g) John i. 9.

(i) Ibid. xvi. 33.

Being thus persuaded that man, without the Spirit of Christ inwardly revealed, can do nothing to the glory of God, or to effect his own salvation; we think this influence especially necessary to the performance of the highest act of which the human mind is capable, even the worship of the Father of lights and of spirits, in spirit and in truth; therefore we consider as obstructions to pure worship, all forms which divert the attention of the mind from the secret influence of this unction from the Holy One. (*k*) Yet, although true worship is not confined to time and place, we think it incumbent on Christians to meet often together, (*l*) in testimony of their dependence on the heavenly Father, and for a renewal of their spiritual strength: nevertheless, in the performance of worship, we dare not depend, for our acceptance with him, on a formal repetition of the words and experiences of others; but we believe it to be our duty to lay aside the activity of the imagination, and to wait in silence to have a true sight of our condition bestowed upon us: believing even a single sigh, (*m*) arising from such a sense of our infirmities, and of the need we have of divine help, to be more acceptable to God, than any performances, however specious, which originate in the will of man.

(*k*) 1 John ii. 20, 27. (*l*) Heb. x. 25. (*m*) Rom. viii. 26.

Ministry. From what has been said respecting worship, it follows that the ministry we approve must have its origin from the same source : for that which is needful for a man's own direction, and for his acceptance with God, (x) must be eminently so to enable him to be helpful to others. Accordingly we believe the renewed assistance of the light and power of Christ, to be indispensably necessary for all true ministry ; and that this holy influence is not at our command, or to be procured by study, but is the free gift of God to chosen and devoted servants.— From hence arises our testimony against preaching for hire, and in contradiction to Christ's positive command, " Freely ye have received, freely give ;" (o) and hence our conscientious refusal to support such ministry by tithes or other means.

Women's * As we dare not encourage any ministry, but that which we believe to
Preaching. spring from the influence of the Holy Spirit, so neither dare we attempt to restrain this influence to persons of any condition in life, or to the male sex alone ; but, as male and female are one in Christ, we allow such of the female sex as we believe to be endued with a right qualification for the ministry, to exercise their gifts for the general edification of the church : and this liberty we esteem to be a peculiar mark of the gospel dispensation, as foretold

(n) Jeri xxiii. 30 to 32.

(o) Matt. x. 8.

by the prophet Joel, (p) and noticed by the apostle Peter. (q)

There are two ceremonies in use *Baptism*
among most professors of the Chris- *and the*
tian name; Water-Baptism, and what *Supper.*
is termed the Lord's Supper. The first
of these is generally esteemed the essential means of
initiation into the church of Christ; and the latter of
maintaining communion with him. But as we have
been convinced, that nothing short of his redeeming
power, inwardly revealed, can set the soul free from
the thralldom of sin; by this power alone we believe
salvation to be effected. We hold that as there is
one Lord and one faith, (r) so his baptism is one in
nature and operation; that nothing short of it can
make us living members of his mystical body; and
that the baptism with water, administered by his
fore-runner John, belonged, as the latter confessed, to
an inferior and decreasing dispensation. (s)

With respect to the other rite, we believe that
communion between Christ and his church is not
maintained by that, nor any other external perform-
ance, but only by a real participation of his divine
nature (t) through faith; that this is the supper
alluded to in the Revelation, (u) "Behold I stand at
the door and knock. If any man hear my voice,

(p) Joel ii. 28, 29.

(q) Acts ii. 16, 17.

(r) Eph. iv. 5.

(s) John iii. 30.

(t) 2 Pet. i. 4.

(u) Rev. iii. 20.

“and open the door, I will come in to him; and will
 “sup with him, and he with me;” and that where
 the substance is attained, it is unnecessary to attend to
 the shadow; which doth not confer grace, and con-
 cerning which, opinions so different, and animosities
 so violent, have arisen.

Universal Grace. Now, as we thus believe that the
 grace of God, which comes by Jesus

Christ, is alone sufficient for salvation,
 we can neither admit that it is conferred on a few
 only, whilst others are left without it; nor, thus
 asserting its universality, can we limit its operation to
 a partial cleansing of the soul from sin, even in this
 life. We entertain worthier notions both of the
 power and goodness of our heavenly Father, and be-
 lieve that he doth vouchsafe to assist the obedient to
 experience a total surrender of the natural will, to the
Perfection. guidance of his pure uttering Spirit;
 through whose renewed assistance they
 are enabled to bring forth fruits unto holiness, and to
 stand perfect in their present rank. (x)

There are not many of our tenets more generally
 known than our testimony against oaths, and against

Oaths and War. war. With respect to the former of these,
 we abide literally by Christ's positive
 injunction, delivered in his sermon on

the mount, “Swear not at all.” (y) From the same sa-
 cred collection of the most excellent precepts of moral
 and religious duty, from the example of our Lord him-

(x) Matt. v. 48. Eph. iv. 13. Col. iv. 12. (y) Matt. v. 34

self; (2) and from the correspondent convictions of his Spirit in our hearts, we are confirmed in the belief that wars and fightings are, in their origin and effects, utterly repugnant to the Gospel, which full breathes peace and good-will to men. We also are clearly of the judgment, that if the benevolence of the Gospel were generally prevalent in the minds of men, it would effectually prevent them from oppressing, much more from enslaving, their brethren, (of whatever colour or complexion) for whom, as for themselves, Christ died; and would even influence their conduct in their treatment of the brute creation; which would no longer groan, the victims of their avarice, or of their false ideas of pleasure.

Some of our tenets have in former times, as hath been shewn, subjected *Government.* our Friends to much suffering from Government, though to the salutary purposes of government, our principles are a security. They inculcate submission to the laws in all cases wherein conscience is not violated. But we hold, that as Christ's kingdom is not of this world, it is not the business of the civil magistrate to interfere in matters of religion; but to maintain the external peace and good order of the community. We therefore think persecution, even in the smallest degree, unwarrantable. We are careful in requiring our members not to be concerned in illicit trade, nor in any manner to defraud the revenue.

(2) Matt. v. 39, 44. &c. ch. xxvi. 52, 53. Luke xxii. 51. John xviii. 11.

It is well known that the society, from its first appearance, has disused those names *Department.* of the months and days, which having been given in honour of the heroes or false gods of the heathen, originated in their flattery or superstition; and the custom of speaking to a single person in the plural number, as having arisen also from motives of adulation. Compliments, superfluity of apparel and furniture, outward shews of rejoicing and mourning, and observation of days and times, we esteem to be incompatible with the simplicity and sincerity of a Christian life; and publick diversions, gaming, and other vain amusements of the world, we cannot but condemn. They are a waste of that time which is given us for nobler purposes; and divert the attention of the mind from the sober duties of life, and from the reproofs of instruction, by which we are guided to an everlasting inheritance.

To conclude, although we have exhibited the several tenets which distinguish our religious society, as objects of our belief; yet we are sensible that a true and living faith is not produced in the mind of man by his own effort; but is the free gift of God (z) in Christ Jesus, nourished and increased by the progressive operation of his spirit in our hearts, and our proportionate obedience. (a) Therefore, although, for the preservation of the testimonies given us to bear, and for the peace and good order of the society, we deem

(z) Eph. ii. 8.

(a) John vii. 17.

it necessary that those who are admitted into membership with us, should be previously convinced of those doctrines which we esteem essential ; yet we require no formal subscription to any articles, either as a condition of membership, or a qualification for the service of the church. We prefer the judging of men by their fruits, and depending on the aid of Him, who, by his prophet, hath promised to be “a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment.” (b) Without this, there is a danger of receiving numbers into outward communion, without any addition to that spiritual sheep-fold, whereof our blessed Lord declared himself to be both the door and the shepherd : (c) that is, such as know his voice, and follow him in the paths of obedience.

(b) Isaiah xxviii. 6. (c) John x. 7. 11.

CHAPTER III.

DISCIPLINE.

THE purposes which our discipline hath chiefly in view, are the relief of the poor,—the maintenance of good order,—the support of the testimonies which we believe it is our duty to bear to the world,—and the help and recovery of such as are overtaken in faults.

In the practice of discipline, we think it indispensable that the order recommended by Christ himself be invariably observed: (a) “If thy brother shall trespass
“ against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee
“ and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast
“ gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee,
“ then take with thee one or two more, that in the
“ mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may
“ be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them
“ tell it unto the church.”

(a) Matt. xviii. 15 to 17.

To effect the salutary purposes of *Meetings* discipline, meetings were appointed, at an early period of the society, which, *for* from the times of their being held, *Discipline.* were called Quarterly-meetings. It was afterwards found expedient * to divide the districts of those meetings, and to meet more frequently; from when arose Monthly-meetings, subordinate to those held quarterly. At length, in 1669, † a Yearly-meeting was established, to superintend, assist, and provide rules for, the whole: previously to which, general meetings had been occasionally held.

A Monthly-meeting is usually composed of several particular congregations, † situated within a convenient *Monthly Meetings* distance from each other. Its business is to provide for the subsistence of the poor, and *Poor.* for the education of their offspring; to judge of the sincerity and fitness of persons appearing to be convinced of the religious principles of the society, and desiring to be *Convinced Persons.* admitted into membership ‖; to excite

* Sewell. 485.

† Fox, 390.

‡ Where this is the case, it is usual for the members of each congregation to form what is called a Preparative Meeting, because its business is to prepare whatever may occur among themselves, to be laid before the Monthly-meeting.

‖ On applications of this kind, a small committee is appointed to visit the party, and report to the Monthly-meeting; which is directed by our rules not to admit any into membership, without allowing a seasonable time to consider their conduct.

due attention to the discharge of religious and moral duty; and to deal with disorderly members. Monthly meetings also grant to such of their members as re-

Certificates of Removal. move into other Monthly-meetings, certificates of their membership and conduct; without which they cannot gain membership in such meetings. Each Monthly-meeting is required to appoint certain persons, under

Overseers. the name of Overseers, who are to take care that the rules of our discipline be put in practice; and when any case of complaint, or disorderly conduct, comes to their knowledge, to see that private admonition, agreeably to the gospel rule before-mentioned, be given, previously to its being laid before the Monthly-meeting.

Mode of Dealing with Offenders. When a case is introduced, it is usual for a small committee to be appointed to visit the offender, to endeavour to convince him of his error, and to induce him to forsake and condemn it.*

If they succeed, the person is by minute declared to have made satisfaction for the offence; if not, he is disowned as a member of the society.†

* This is generally done by a written acknowledgement, signed by the offender.

† This is done by what is termed a Testimony of Denial: which is a paper reciting the offence, and sometimes the steps which have led to it: next, the means unavailingly used to reclaim the offender; after that, a clause disowning him; to which is usually added an expression of desire for his repentance, and for his being restored to membership.

In disputes between individuals, it has long been the decided judgment *Arbitration.* of the society that its members should not sue each other at law. It therefore enjoins all to end their differences by speedy and impartial arbitration, agreeably to rules laid down. If any refuse to adopt this mode, or, having adopted it, to submit to the award, it is the direction of the Yearly-meeting, that such be disowned.

To Monthly-meetings also belongs the allowing of marriages; for our *Marriages.* society hath always scrupled to acknowledge the exclusive authority of the priests in the solemnization of marriage. Those who intend to marry appear together and propose their intention to the Monthly-meeting; and if not attended by their parents and guardians, produce a written certificate of their consent, signed in the presence of witnesses. The meeting then appoints a committee to inquire whether they are clear of other engagements respecting marriage; and if at a subsequent meeting, to which the parties also come and declare the continuance of their intention, no objections be reported, they have the meeting's consent to solemnize their intended marriage. This is done in a publick meeting for worship, towards the close whereof the parties stand up, and solemnly take each other for husband and wife. A certificate of the proceedings is then publicly read, and signed by the parties, and afterwards by the relations and others as witnesses. Of such certificates the Monthly-meeting keeps

Births and Burials.

keeps a record; as also of the births and burials of its members. A certificate of the date, of the name of the infant, and of its parents, signed by those present at the birth, is the subject of one of these last-mentioned records; and an order for the interment, countersigned by the grave-maker, of the other. The naming of children is without ceremony. Burials are also conducted in a simple manner. The body, followed by the relations and friends, is sometimes, previously to interment, carried to a meeting; and at the grave a pause is generally made; on both which occasions it frequently falls out, that one or more friends present have somewhat to express for the edification of those who attend; but no religious rite is considered as an essential part of burial.

Quarterly Meetings.

Several Monthly-meetings compose a Quarterly-meeting. At the Quarterly-meeting are produced written answers from the Monthly-meetings, to certain queries respecting the conduct of their members, and the meetings care over them.. The accounts thus received, are digested into one, which is sent, also in the form of answers to Queries, by representatives, to the Yearly-meeting.

Queries.

—Appeals from the judgment of Monthly-meetings, are brought to the Quarterly-meetings; whose business also it is to assist in any difficult case, or where remissness appears

Appeals.

in

in the care of the Monthly-meetings over the individuals who compose them.

The Yearly-meeting has the general *The Yearly Meeting.* superintendence of the Society in the country in which it is established ;* and therefore, as the accounts which it receives discover the state of inferior meetings, as particular exigencies require, or as the meeting is impressed with a sense of duty, it gives forth its advice, makes such regulations as appear to be requisite, or excites to the observance of those already made ; and sometimes appoints committees to visit those Quarterly-meetings which appear to be in need of immediate help. Appeals from the judgment of Quarterly-meetings are here finally determined ; and a brotherly correspondence, by epistles, is maintained with other Yearly-meetings.†

In this place it is proper to add, that, *Women's Meetings* as we believe women may be rightly called to the work of the ministry, we also think that to them belongs a share in the support of our Christian discipline ; and that some parts of it, wherein their own sex is concerned, devolve on them with peculiar propriety. Accordingly they have Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly meetings of their own sex,

* There are seven Yearly-meetings, viz. 1 London, to which come Representatives from Ireland, 2 New-England, 3 New-York, 4 Pennsylvannia and New Jersey, 5 Maryland, 6 Virginia, 7 The Carolinas and Georgia.

† See the last note.

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held at the same time and in the same place with those of the men ; but separately, and without the power of making rules : and it may be remarked that during the persecutions, which in the last century occasioned the imprisonment of so many of the men, the care of the poor often fell on the women, and was by them satisfactorily administered.

*Meetings of
Ministers &
Elders.*

In order that those who are in the situation of ministers may have the tender sympathy and counsel of those of either sex, * who, by their experience in the work of religion, are qualified for that service ; the Monthly-meetings are advised to select such, under the denomination of Elders. These, and Ministers approved by their Monthly-meetings, † have meetings peculiar to themselves, called Meetings of Ministers and Elders ; in which they have an opportunity of exciting each other to a discharge of their several duties, and of extending advice to those who may appear to be weak, without any needless exposure. These meetings are generally held

* Fox, 461, 492.

† Those who believe themselves required to speak in meetings for worship, are not immediately acknowledged as ministers by their Monthly-meetings ; but time is taken for judgment, that the meeting may be satisfied of their call and qualification. It will also sometimes happen, that such as are not approved, will obtrude themselves as ministers, to the grief of their brethren ; but much forbearance is used towards these, before the disapprobation of the meeting is publicly testified.

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in the compass of each Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly meeting. They are conducted by rules prescribed by the Yearly-meeting, and have no authority to make any alteration or addition to them. The members of them unite with their brethren in the Meetings for Discipline, and are equally accountable to the latter for their conduct.

It is to a meeting of this kind in London, called the Second-day's Morning-meeting, that the revisal of manuscripts concerning our principles, previously to publication, is intrusted by the Yearly-meeting held in London; and also the granting, in the intervals of the Yearly-meeting, *Certificates* certificates of approbation to such *to Ministers.* ministers as are concerned to travel in the work of the ministry in foreign parts. When a visit of this kind doth not extend beyond Great Britain, a certificate from the Monthly-meeting of which the minister is a member is sufficient; if to Ireland, the concurrence of the Quarterly-meeting is also required. Regulations of similar tendency obtain in other Yearly-meetings.

The Yearly-meeting of London, in the year 1675, appointed a meeting to be held in that city, for the purpose of advising and assisting in cases of suffering *Meeting for* *Sufferings.* for conscience sake, which hath continued with great use to the society to this day. It is composed of friends under the name of Correspondents, chosen by the

the several Quarterly-meetings and who reside in or near the city. The same meetings also appoint members of their own in the country as correspondents, who are to join their brethren in London on emergency. The names of all these correspondents, previously to their being recorded as such, are submitted to the approbation of the Yearly-meeting. Those of the men who are approved ministers are also members of this meeting, which is called the Meeting for Sufferings; a name arising from its original purpose, which is not yet become entirely obsolete.

The Yearly-meeting has intrusted the Meeting for Sufferings with the care of printing and distributing books, and with the management of its stock*; and considered as a standing committee of the Yearly-meeting, it hath a general care of whatever may arise, during the intervals of that meeting, affecting the society, and requiring immediate attention: particularly of those circumstances which may occasion an application to Government.

There is not in any of the meetings which have been mentioned, any president, as we believe that Divine Wisdom alone ought to preside; nor hath any member a right to claim pre-eminence over the rest. The office of Clerk, with a few exceptions, is un-

* This is an occasional voluntary contribution, expended in printing books,—house-rent for a Clerk, and his wages for keeping records,—the passage of ministers who visit their brethren beyond sea,—and some small incidental charges.

undertaken voluntarily by some member ; as is also the keeping of the records. Where these are very voluminous, and require a house for their deposit, (as is the case in London, where the general records of the Society in Great Britain are kept,) a clerk is hired to have the care of them ; but except a few clerks of this kind, and persons who have the care of meeting-houses, none receive any stipend or gratuity for their services in our religious society.

Thus have we given a view of the foundation and establishment of our discipline, by which it will be seen, that it is not (as hath been frequently insinuated) merely the work of modern times ; but was the early care and concern of our pious predecessors.—We cannot better close this short sketch of it, than by observing, that if the exercise of discipline should in some instances appear to press hard upon those, who, neglecting the monitions of divine counsel in their hearts, are also unwilling to be accountable to their brethren ; yet, if that great, leading, and indispensable principle, enjoined by our Lord, be observed by those who undertake to be active in it, “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,”* it will prevent the censure of the church from falling on any thing but that which really obstructs the progress of Truth. Discipline will then promote, in an eminent degree, that love of our neighbour, which is

* Matthew vii. 12.

the mark of discipleship, and without which the profession of love to God, and to his cause, is a vain pretence. "He," said the beloved disciple, "that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."*

* 1 John iv. 20, 21.



FINIS.

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